

NATIONAL CONGRESS *Bulletin*



DECEMBER, 1939

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
600 South Michigan Boulevard
Chicago, Illinois

Vol. 7 — No. 4

Dear Local President:

The winter holidays come and go with amazing swiftness! Before we realize it the vacations are over, our children have returned to school — and we as presidents will face a New Year of parent-teacher work.

The New Year of 1940 — a year of uncertainties and perplexities for all mankind — calls on us as parent-teacher leaders for a greater contribution than ever before. To those who work today with us in the parent-teacher association we must insure that freedom which means room to grow, the expansion of experience, the choosing and taking of hitherto untried ways and directions. Perhaps there will be blundering and mistakes; certainly there will be failure to attain all that we vision for our organization. But eventually this freedom to think and plan and act will unlock the strength and powers of our members. We will have made it possible for them to find their answers to the problems of children, of home and school, and of the community.

This is our privilege and our service in the New Year.

Loyally yours,

Frances S. Pettengill

President,
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

1940 WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

THE 1940 White House Conference on Children in a Democracy will be held in Washington, D. C., January 18 to 20. The purpose of this Conference and the activities which it will initiate is to furnish an opportunity for us to test ourselves and our institutions by the extent to which they serve our children.

In such a time as the present, the needs of childhood require particular attention. Despite international problems, the responsibility for meeting the continuing needs of the children must be accepted. It cannot be postponed.

At the opening session on January 18, a general report will be presented by the Report Committee for consideration by the Conference. Topical reports which will be discussed in

group meetings are: The Family as the Threshold to Democracy; Economic Resources of Families and Communities; Housing the Family; Economic Aid to Families; Social Services for Children; Children in Minority Groups; Religion and Children in a Democracy; Health and Medical Care for Children; Education Through the School; Child Labor and Youth Employment; Child Development Through Play and Recreation.

Morning and afternoon sessions on January 19 will be devoted to discussion of the General Conference Report and action on the report. President Roosevelt will address the evening session at the White House.

"Translating the Conference Report into Action" is the general subject of the final session of the Conference on January 20.

FACTS ABOUT OUR LOCALS

From the 1938-39

Annual Local Unit Summary

There are 27,111 local units with a membership of 2,291,420 in the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Since 1934 the membership has increased each year.

1934	1,465,910
1935	1,727,703
1936	1,877,073
1937	2,056,777
1938	2,222,218
1939	2,291,420

During the same period the number of local units has also shown a steady increase.

1934	20,731
1935	23,442
1936	24,912
1937	25,500
1938	26,450
1939	27,111

Congress parent-teacher associations are located in every type of community: approximately 54% are in urban communities and 46% in rural communities.

Parent-teacher associations are found in all types of schools. Approximately 63% are in elementary schools, 9% in junior and senior highschools, and 18% in consolidated and in eleven-grade and twelve-grade schools. Ninety-eight percent of the local units function in connection with public schools. One and one-half percent of the local units are preschool associations.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Attached to the November issue of the *National Congress Bulletin* was a Local Unit Report Form. Please fill in and mail this form at the close of the year's work to your state office unless the State Congress instructs otherwise.



SIGNPOSTS AND GUIDES

Covenanting with Youth

"Home, school, and community must consciously plan through example, guidance, and opportunity to train youth to make decisions so that they may be ready to accept responsibility for adult life. Adults, on the other hand, hold the obligation of making a place for youth in a democratic society."

— FROM THE 1939 CONVENTION FINDINGS

The following suggested compact between youth and society in the interest of the general welfare of the people is taken from *Youth Education Today*.

SOCIETY IS TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR . . .

I

Growth under living conditions which consistently and continuously provide for normal physical and mental development; adequate medical service; a social environment in which youth is spared unnecessary stresses and strains caused by domestic unhappiness, poverty, crime, political corruption, and community conflicts.

II

Guidance toward wholesome personal satisfactions and social usefulness; training needed for the particular job; assured opportunity for employment, guaranteeing the economic security which will enable youth to live happily, to support a family, and to face without anxiety the financial exigencies of life.

III

Competent leadership during the years of growth; assurance of contacts with the leaders of thought and action; training in the technics and obligations of leadership.

IV

Self-expression through recreation and companionships; acquaintance with nature, science, philosophical and religious thought.

V

Freedom of thought and action — including freedom of speech, a free press, and the right to free assembly; protection from misleading propaganda by ready access to the sources of truth and by training in straight thinking.

VI

Participation in the affairs of a democratic state; active promotion of individual and social justice; realistic approaches to the establishment of the ideal of a world at peace.

YOUTH IS TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR . . .

I

Helping to plan and to execute a program of healthful living and worthy endeavor; the conservation and improvement of the home that has nurtured him, the schools that have sponsored his education, and the community, the state, and the nation that have fostered and protected his growth.

II

Conscientious use of the opportunities offered by society for guidance and training; determined efforts to make good on the job; the practice of personal foresight, but at the same time, constructive work for the welfare of the group, avoidance of unnecessary waste and of exploitation of others.

III

Acceptance of the services of those competent to lead; increasing exercise of initiative and acceptance of responsibility in accordance with capacities.

IV

Development of individual talents; the pursuit of worthwhile leisure activities; and appreciation of the racial inheritance.

V

A steadfast determination to think for himself, to uphold that which is good, to respect the opinions of others, to act with the courage of a free man, and to share the truth with others.

VI

Acceptance of the privileges and obligations of citizenship in an ever-advancing society; loyalty to basic values of democracy; courageous activity in promoting good will.

YOUTH and SOCIETY do enter into this compact to work cooperatively for the realization of the foregoing ideals to the end that, through opportunities and responsibilities afforded YOUTH, democratic ideals may be perfected and perpetuated in the U.S.A.

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH THE P.T.A.

December: Interest Deepens



I. THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM

For many associations, the membership campaign is over, the program is well under way, and the community has become interested in the activities of the association. The immediate problem is to secure the attendance of our members at the parent-teacher meetings.

A parent-teacher member has the opportunity of attending the meetings of the association for the purpose of acquiring information, developing acquaintance and fellowship, and finding a chance to serve the community in participation in parent-teacher activities.

If the meetings of the association fail to produce information, fellowship, and an opportunity to serve, members will not attend.

An atmosphere of friendliness — a feeling that people themselves are wanted — does much to induce parent-teacher association members to attend association meetings. Parent-teacher leaders then will endeavor to create a friendly atmosphere within the membership which acts as a cohesive force — strengthening the association throughout.

Frequently, officers and committee chairmen — because they are working together closely and have much in common — seem to form a clique. In such an atmosphere the other members may feel very much out of things, some-

times resolving never to attend the P.T.A. meeting again.

A hospitality committee can do much to create a feeling of friendliness by greeting people before the meeting begins. The serving of light refreshments or other means, such as games, which induce members and visitors to linger and talk after the meetings, aid in establishing a feeling of good will. Sociability grows by being exercised! But more than a handshake and a cup of tea are needed if increased attendance is to result.

II. GETTING ATTENDANCE

Give broad advance publicity to meeting plans through newspapers, posters, and announcements to members and nonmembers.

Pay particular attention to new members — make them feel welcome; arrange to do some work toward orienting new members before the meeting; explain any problems or questions about the work.

Avoid an overcrowded meeting schedule.

Have an informal social period when parents meet teachers.

Do not overemphasize money-raising.

Make plans to take care of children while parents attend meetings.

Discourage lengthy reports and speeches.

Do not allow a small group to "run the show."

Encourage officers and leaders to set and maintain a good example in attendance.

And above all, open and close on time. Nothing is more discouraging to members than to have to wait for the meeting to open, and to close it late.

III. AN ATTENDANCE MEETING

An occasional meeting may be devoted to the consideration of attend-

ance for the purpose of making all members "attendance conscious."

1. Make every effort to get a large attendance at this meeting.

2. Endeavor to make it the most interesting meeting of the year.

3. Use a phrase or slogan:

"P.T.A. — Parents and Teachers Attend"

"Taking Time Out for the P.T.A."

"Pulling Your Oar at the P.T.A. Meeting"

"Every Member in Attendance"

"A Meeting Without Me? Never!"

4. Explain the obligations, opportunities, and reasons for attendance on the part of the membership.

5. Allow plenty of time for good fellowship and sociability.

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION

1201 Sixteenth Street, Northwest
WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 9, 1939

Mrs. J. K. Pettengill, President
National Congress of
Parents and Teachers
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mrs. Pettengill:

I forgot to tell you about one interesting use we are making of the "Purposes" reprints from the *National Parent-Teacher*. In each of the forty schools in our civic education study, we leave enough copies for the faculty and for the leaders of the parent-teacher organization, suggesting that they work out some sort of joint consideration of this material. It works well. So far, all except one of our selected schools have had a thriving P.T.A. unit. I wonder if there isn't a cause and effect relationship there that works both ways.

Sincerely,
WILLIAM G. CARR
Secretary

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NATIONAL PARENT-TEACHER

News About Our Magazine

THE MAGAZINE...

A Program Reservoir

• A new trend in parent-teacher work is to include group discussion as part of the regular meeting of the association. Everywhere people seem eager to talk over problems of home and school cooperation. There is increasing interest in civic responsibility. Parents and teachers want to learn how they can attack the underlying problems which must be solved before children and youth can grow and develop to their fullest capacities.

• One of the best possible sources of help in planning programs which include group discussion is our own Magazine, the *National Parent-Teacher*. A file of past issues is a never failing reservoir of program material which may be adapted to meet the needs of any local group; current issues are full of timely suggestions; and coming issues promise fresh inspiration and extended areas of interest.

• • •

FOR example, one chairman discovered in the June-July 1939 issue the key to the program for the entire year. In Dr. Carr's article, "*From Purposes to Results*," she found mentioned three factors which enter into the problem of education for democracy:

1. The human stock, or the children to be educated
2. The schools
3. Other educative forces in the community

She used these as framework on which to base the discussions, and named the program, "*The Children of Today — The Citizens of Tomorrow*." The first few meetings were related to the first factor — the children in our schools. The members of the association considered the potentialities of these children, their racial stock and characteristics, the children's abilities and limitations. A lively discussion of these topics led to a survey of the physical, mental, social, and spiritual

needs of the children. The members are making a study of how the community may best meet these needs. As preparation for participation in this part of the program, the chairman suggested reading the articles now appearing on "*American Youth*." Three articles in the October issue, "*Fugitive Children*," "*Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary*," and "*My Brother's Keeper*" have also been used to enrich the discussions.

In considering the second factor, the schools, this chairman is planning

CHALLENGING ARTICLES in the JANUARY, 1940, ISSUE

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We Are All Neighbors Now
Peace-Making for the Future
Finding the Middle Way
A Campus Episode
Editorial: The Pursuit of
Happiness
"Where Are You Going,
My Pretty Maid?"
Father Remembers
"Ideas Are on the Wing"
Learning About Babies

to have the association evaluate the school in the light of the articles based on the "*Purposes of Education in a Democracy*" — a series which appeared in the January, February, March, April, and May, 1939, issues. In the summarizing article by Dr. Carr, in the June-July number, there is a list of questions which will stimulate discussion and action.

Later in the year this particular association will consider the third factor — other educative forces in the community. Topics selected for discussion include the playground, the recreation center, the radio, the clubhouse, the movies, the public library, and the newsstand. Help in developing

these topics will be found in the monthly feature, "*As Told by Our National Chairmen*." For example, this feature in the December 1939 issue contains an excellent suggestion for discussing recreation.

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ANOTHER association struggling with the problem of making high-school programs interesting, used Dr. Edwin A. Lee's article on "*Education for Economic Efficiency*," supplementing it with material from his address at the National Convention. A panel composed of parents, students, teachers, civic authorities, and representatives of labor and industry considered the seven questions raised by Dr. Lee. To start the discussion, the leader read the National President's inspiring Message, "*Eyes to the Dawn*," in the August-September issue.

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THESE are mere suggestions of the use that can be made of the Magazine in parent-teacher work. There need be no cry of dearth of helpful material to direct parent-teacher activity with such an inspiring guide as our *National Parent-Teacher* so readily at hand.

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Offer Extended

Due to the fact that they were unable to take advantage of the offer during the holidays, many presidents have asked to have the time limit for securing the Treasurer's Accounting Set extended to February 1, 1940. Therefore, we are extending this offer to February 1.

Have you passed around the sample copy of the November issue of the Magazine? Many local presidents are using this copy to interest members in subscribing and in that way are finding it easy to secure the Accounting Set for the association. Only two new subscriptions are needed to secure the Set.

